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ABSTRACT

This two-page lesson plan for Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English as a Second Language (ESL) uses a children's book ("Jip: His Story,"' by Katherine Paterson) to provide an integrated learning experience for students. The lesson plan includes a synopsis of the story and general suggestions for using the story in a basic skills class. It also includes teaching suggestions for each chapter and an account of field testing the lesson plan, with a synopsis of teachers' suggested changes and student responses. (KC)

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Teacher to Teacher *October 2000*

JIP: His Story

Teaching Ideas from the OLRC Reading Group

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Ohio Literacy Resource Center

Enhancing Adult Literacy in Ohio

Teacher to Teacher

Teaching Ideas from the OLRC Reading Group

JIP: His Story

Author: *Katherine Paterson*
Title: *Jip: His Story*
New York: Lodestar
ISBN: *0-525-67543-4*

Summary: Jip, a young orphan in the mid-1850's, lives on a poor farm, interacts with Put "the lunatic," and wonders about his past. Eventually he attends school and, with the help of Teacher (Lyddie from the Paterson book by the same name) and her Quaker friend, discovers the truth about his identity.

General Notes: GED-level learners will be able to read this book without much teacher assistance. Those with less reading ability can a) trade reading and listening with the teacher read or b) listen to a tape-recorded version of the text as they read it.

Students may want to note historical information or references as they read. Perhaps they could keep track of this information in their journals. Every few chapters, a group discussion of history would serve to summarize this aspect of learning. "Then and now" explorations are also possible throughout the book. Students (or pairs) may wish to select one of these topics: treatment of the poor, treatment of the mentally ill, attitudes toward education. As they read or listen, students can write notes about their topic. Every few chapters, they can summarize their notes into a chart or Venn diagram• that contrasts "then" and "now."

Teaching Suggestions:

Read the introduction to learners (before page 1). Invite predictions about the story.

Chapters 1-2: Read aloud to learners. Provide students with a three-column chart about Jip: looks, personality, situation. After chapter 1 and again after chapter 2, invite learners to make notes on the charts and to share this information with each other. You may want to invite learners to refine their ideas about Jip as the story progresses by asking them to revise these charts at the end of every 2nd chapter. After chapter 2, learners may also want to speculate about Put, either through discussion or writing.

Chapters 3-5: The Stranger is introduced in these chapters. Ask learners to speculate about who he is and what he may want. (Ask them to add to their ideas about the Stranger again after reading chapter 7, chapter 9, and chapter 11.) After reading chapter 5, invite a discussion of Jip's interactions with people and with animals. A Think-Pair-Share• activity might work well for this purpose. First, ask individuals to think back through the chapters to make notes about Jip and people and about Jip and animals. Then ask pairs of learners to share their notes. Finally, invite whole-group discussion of this issue. A Venn diagram• will be a good summarizing vehicle.

If learners are keeping "then and now" notes, ask for ideas about the treatment of the poor and about the treatment of mentally ill people after learners have finished reading chapter 5.

Chapters 6 and 7: Ask learners to divide these two chapters as follows: stop at the extra space on page 52, and the end of chapter 6, at the extra space on page 61, and at the end of chapter 7. (They can make pencil marks in their books or use a sticky note to remind them when to stop reading.) Use Harste's "Linguistic Roulette" strategy throughout these chapters:

1. Students read one section. Then they look back though the section and identify no more than 3 sentences that they think are particularly important or interesting.
2. In pairs or groups of three, students share the sentences they have selected, talk about why they selected those sentences, and discuss the story so far.

3. Students read the next section, identify sentences, and so forth. This cycle continues until the chapters are read.

At the end of chapter 7, do a Discussion Web* for chapters 1-7. Use this sentence to prompt discussion: The people on the farm were treated like slaves. Pairs of students spend time looking back through the book to find as many reasons as possible for agreeing with this sentence and as many reasons as possible for disagreeing with the sentence. Then each pair joins with another. These groups share their reasons and together draw a conclusion about the sentence (i. e., whether people on the farm were treated like slaves or not). Conclusions and reasons are shared with the whole group.

Chapters 8 and 9: At the end of chapter 8, invite a "then and now" discussion about schools, education, and teachers. (The end of chapter 11 would be a good time to continue this discussion.) Also, ask learners to make notes about how the children interact with Put and how the adults interact with Put. They can then draw conclusions and speculate as to reasons for the differences. They may also want to consider if children and adults deal differently with people like Put in today's life.

Chapters 10 and 11: Read these chapters to learners. After reading, ask learners to summarize Jip's view of himself. Then ask individuals or groups to summarize these people's views of Jip: Teacher, Lucy, Put, Mr. and Mrs. Lyman. Comparison/contrast discussion or writing can follow. Students may also want to think about a) where people's ideas about Jip came from, b) why people's ideas about Jip differ, and c) whose ideas they agree with (and why). Other topics for discussion or writing include a) what Teacher may know about the Stranger, b) what Jip's waiting is all about, and c) what the last paragraph of chapter 11 might mean.

Chapter 12 and 13: Use a DR-TA* (if learners are reading) or a DL-TA* (if learners are listening). Stopping points for discussion: a) p. 116, paragraph 2: "The stranger was back"; b) p. 117, before the beginning of the last paragraph: "Jip had known sheep with more gumption."; d) p. 120, 2/3 of the way down: "What does thee know of thy beginnings?", e) p. 121, second line before end: "...what was being said."; f) end of the chapter; g) p. 129, end of first full paragraph: "made sure that her child would not grow up a slave."; h) p. 130, middle: "for his noisy complaints."; i) end of chapter.

Chapter 14 and 15: After students have read (or listened to) these chapters, use the "Agree? Disagree? Why?"* strategy. In pairs or groups of three, learners consider each of the following sentences. They decide if they agree or disagree with each and write reasons for their decisions. Whole-group discussion concludes the activity.

⇒ Jip prepared well for the journey.
⇒ Jip's decision to take Put was a good one.
⇒ The Brackett boys aren't doing anything wrong.

Chapter 16 to end: Read these aloud to learners. Be sure to include pages 179 and 180. Discussion and/or writing to conclude the book might focus on a) how Jip changed throughout the book and, perhaps, how he stayed the same; b) the role of Quakers and other abolitionists in the mid-19th century; or c) the notions of friendship or sacrifice as portrayed in the book. GED teachers may also want to supplement the book with historical information about the times, including the specifics of the Fugitive Slave Act. (Virginia Hamilton's *Anthony Burns* is another excellent book that deals with this issue.)

*Directions for using these classroom strategies can be found on the OLRC web site at <literacy.kent.edu/eureka/strategies/read-listen.html>.

Field Testing:

Jip was field-tested in a variety of classroom situations including Even Start ABLE, ESOL, and community college developmental study skills. Student ages ranged from 18-45. The ABLE class averaged 7th grade reading level and the ESOL, intermediate level. Classes ranged in size from 5-12 students. The racially diverse community college classes consisted of employed non-traditional students, both male and female, who were enrolled in a study skills and college reading course.

Students in all the classes responded positively to the book easily identifying with Jip. The vocabulary was difficult for some students. Poor attendance posed a problem in continuity for the ESOL class, but the students enjoyed it as a read aloud and as an application of pronunciation, meaning, and grammar. The ABLE teacher would work daily rather than twice a week if she were teaching the book again.

Teachers' Changes

Teachers adapted the Teaching Ideas to fit their purposes. The community college teacher used particular chapters that related to the experience of her students. After volunteering to read aloud the chapter on Jip going to school as a non-traditional student, participants wrote a short response and prediction. Using Chapter 8 in which Jip discovers his identity, a different community college class applied their listening and note-taking skills and their ability to make inferences.

Student Responses

The Even Start ABLE class especially enjoyed using the "looks-personality-situation" chart for Chapters 1 and 2, which kept their interest focused. One ESOL student wanted to know where he could buy the book.

The ESOL teacher commented that one student received help in pronunciation and word meaning from a more advanced student but "as the story progressed, the young man seemed to get a feel for the words and moved throughout the story without much help" The ESOL students were fascinated with the concept of a "trap door" which lead to discussion of hiding runaway slaves in the Underground Railroad.

When the community college teacher shared the results and other Jip activities with the department head, he suggested they order copies of the book to use in future classes.